

True Wisdom:

OR,

CONSIDERATIONS

For every Day of the

WEEK,

Written in *ITALIAN*
by the Pious and Learned
Father *F. Paul Segnery*,
of the Society of *JESUITS*,
and late Preacher to
Pope *Innocent XII.*

WITH

An Appendix of what is
necessary for a good Con-
fession and Communion.

With Approbation and Permission.

Printed in the Year 1722



WEEK

Written in 1865
by the Hon. John
of the Society of 1807
and the President
of the New York
Historical Society.

An Appendix of what is
necessary for a good
edition and Commentary.

With additional and new
materials.

Printed in the Year 1865



TO THE READER.

 F the main Wheel of a Clock stops, all the rest must stand; so if in a Man, the first Faculty, or Power of the Soul, which is the Understanding, be obstructed by Ignorance, the Will which is guided by the Motion of the Understanding, cannot operate rightly.

No wonder therefore that in our Days, we see so great an Irregularity in the Lives of Christians. The true Causes of it, are Ignorance, and Inconsideration of the Maxims of Faith.

Where there is no Wisdom, (says the wise Man) there is no Good, Prov. 19. And the Pro-

To the Reader.

phet Jeremiah cries out, that the whole Earth is become desolate, because there is none that considers, Jer. 2.

Now, Dear Reader, that you may not be involv'd in this common Ruin, the best way is to lay before ye the Truth, and to beg of ye to cast an Eyey upon it every Day. To this end, you will in this small Manual, find a short Collection of the most choice and efficacious Considerations to move ye to abhor Sin, and avoid the Punishment due to it; nor is it easy thus in Little, to represent sthem more fully and clearly. To make then your best Advantage of them, use the following Method.

Every Morning as soon as you are up, Adore with a profound Awe and Reverence, the God that has creaed ye; give him Thanks for all the great Good he does ye, and beg of him to enlighten ye to see thoroughly, how great an Evil it is to break his Commandments

To the Reader

ments, that being so guided from Above, you may that Day lead your Life as a good Christian ought to do.

Read then the Consideration that is appointed for the present Day; but read it leisurely, and with Attention to every Period, for Pearls are never fish'd for, by those Vessels that run before the Wind, but by such as cast along, and come sometimes to an Anchor.

Now if the Business that attends the Condition of your Life, should not sometimes permit this more than ordinary pausing, that as necessary to weigh and understand well the Truth set before ye; yet fail not to run over, as well as you can at least, one Reflection, who knows but that the bare casting of your Eye upon it, may on a sudden touch your Heart; For even thus God Almighty often shews himself to be the True Light, because, like the Light, he diffuses his Beams in an Instant.

To the Reader.

If therefore your Affairs hinder
ye from perusing these Considerations
betimes in the Morning, Read
them at Mass or at Night before
you go to Bed; and with them pi-
ously conclude the Day; which you
are advised to do, chiefly upon Ho-
ly-days, as consecrated more pecu-
liar to God's Service: And thus
say ye, Morning and Evening,
exercise and examine your self as
in a Mirror. To this purpose, Two
Considerations are assigned for
Sunday. After all shou'd ye not
have Leisure for Reading the
whole, be sure of finding Time at
least to say devoutly the Prayer
that is at the end of every Consi-
deration; since to overcome Sin,
it is most necessary to have our
Hands like Moses's, still lifted
up to Heaven. We must, as our
behaviour teaches, Pray without
ceasing, Luc. 18.
If then you shall faithfully pra-
ctise this Exercise, you may hope
that the same Lord who gave Sight

to

To The Reader.

to the Blind with a little Clay, may
make use of these few worthless
Leaves, renew in your Soul his
marvellous Works, by Communica-
ting to ye the Light of that True
Wisdom, The Beginning of
which, as the Royal Prophet tells
us, is the Fear of offending
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M. R. Dr. New
D. A. G. G. G.

AP- 4 A I. Coll.

APPROBATION.

I Have read this small Treatise, entitl'd *True Wisdom &c.* and find nothing in it but what's conformable to the Faith of the Church, and proper to excite Devotion in the Minds of those who seriously peruse it.

*John Ingleton, Doctor
of Serbon.*

Permis d'imprimer. Fait
ce 26. Mars 1699.

*M. R. De Voyer
D'Argenson*

I. Con-



It is the Holy Spirit who

I. Considerations.

the Lord Jesus Christ

FOR

and the Holy Spirit

SUNDAY.

God's commandment

that you should love

of God and of your

neighbors as yourselves

and that you should

keep his commandments

that you may abide

in his love and in the

love of his Father

and that you may

bring forth much

fruit to the glory

of the Father

who loves you

and who has sent

his Son Jesus

Christ into the

world to save

us from all

iniquity and

to purify

I. Reflection.

Sin is injurious to God.

and to your

neighbors

and to

yourself

and to

the world

and to

the Church

and to

the

Kingdom

of God

Consider, that when

you commit a mortal

Sin you are then truly

and properly unjust

to God, you condemn

and injure him. This is no

sin

True Wisdom. 2

Rhetorical Expression or Metaphor, but a downright Truth. Thus all the Holy Fathers, all the Divines, and the Scriptures themselves speak, where 'tis said, *That the Sinner rises up against God, contemns him, nay comes at last even to tread him under foot.*

But you will perhaps say, alas! I don't sin to contemn God, but only to please my self, Supposing what you alledge to be true, you are nevertheless to know, that there are two sorts of Contempt; an Express and Direct one; and an Indirect and Constructive one: Don't you reckon your self despis'd by your Son, by your Servant, or by your Wife, when they disobey ye? Is not that Prince made little account of by the Person that breaks his Laws? Is not your Friend injur'd by ye when you slight and turn your Back upon him; and



True Wisdom. 3

and is not that Judge condemn'd by him that impudently commits Crimes before his Face? Mark well then, that when you sin, you dishonour God, as the Apostle says, by breaking his Law, Rom. 2. Tho' you do it not with a premeditated Design, you do it by your Actions, by your disobeying his Commands, by not fearing his Justice, by having no regard to his Omnipotence, by not caring for the immense Greatness of him that beholds your Sin, hates, forbids, and is so highly disgusted at it, that cou'd an Immortal God Die, a mortal Sin wou'd be Death to him. Consider then whether any one ought to have so little Apprehension of Sin, as to say, he does not commit it to offend God, but to please and gratify himself,

II. Reflection.

*Who that God is that is
offended*

CONSIDER, who that God is
whom you offend : Fancy
as well as you can, something
of so immense a Beauty, that
the very Glimpse thereof, is e-
nough to ravish all the Behold-
ers ; so that a Body wou'd rather
chuse to see it, tho' but for a
Moment, then to enjoy for
many Ages, all the Pleasures of
the whole Earth. Imagine such
a Majesty, in obedience to whom
it is better to suffer all Misery
here, than to Reign over the
Universe : Conceive, in fine,
such a Bounty, to offend which,
only in Thought, wou'd be a
greater Evil, than if the Hea-
vens were dissolv'd and the
Course of Nature confounded.

And

True Wisdom.

And what wou'd your Thoughts of God thus amount to? Alas! he is yet infinitely greater than you can imagine. Think then, if possible, of greater and greater Perfections, double them a hundred and a thousand times over; fall a multiplying 'em by as many Figures as there are Stars in the Sky, Atoms in the Air, and Drops in the Sea, yet know that all this Greatness in Comparison to God, is infinitely less than the least Worm compared with the whole World.

What Conception then can you frame of this Word GOD? What do ye conceive the meaning is, of having been in all times! Of being present everywhere! Of knowing all Truths! Of being Master of all Perfections! Of enjoying all Good! Of being able to do all things? This Lord nevertheless, who is greater than can be imagin'd,
the

6 True Wisdom.

the best of all Beings, the Fountain and Beginning of All, the sight alone of whom wou'd make ye eternally happy, this Lord do you by mortal Sin trample upon, without being overwhelmed with Horror?

III. Reflection.

Who the Offender is.

Consider, who it is that offends this Lord, and does him so great an Injustice. Consider your self as to your Body. Are you any thing but a Shadow cover'd with Clay? A few Years ago you were nothing, and shortly you will be eaten by the Worms, and what shall be left of ye, will be reduc'd to Ashes. And dares this little Dust fly in the Face of God!

Consider your self next, as to your Soul; being conceiv'd in Original Sin, no sooner had ye

True Wisdom.

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ye your Being, but you were an Enemy to God, a Slave to the Devil, depriv'd of Grace, and eternally banish'd Heaven. All you were born to, is a most profound Ignorance of Mind, a strange Malice of Will, a Weariness in doing well, and an insatiable Lust to commit ill. To all this, how much have you added of your own by so many actual Sins, evil Habits, and Trespases against the Divine Justice which have render'd ye unworthy of the Divine Grace?

If now you have a Mind to know your self yet better; suppose you were compar'd with all the People in the World, with all that have been, are, and shall be; that you were compar'd with all the Angels, and all Beings that possible might have been; who wou'd know you in so vast a Multitude, who wou'd look upon, or have the least regard for ye? If then
you

8 True Wisdom.

you are but as nothing before such a Multitude of Creatures, think what you are before God the Creator of them all, in whose Sight all this Number, and infinitely greater, is as if it were not. What say ye now! Are ye yet capable of the Rashness of a Sinner, that rises up against God! Certain it is, a sorry insect wou'd not appear so prodigiously daring, shou'd it raise it self up against the Sun.

The Prayer.

I know not, O Lord, whether I ought to admire most, thy incomparable Patience in bearing with me, or my own incredible boldness in offending thee. Thou art on a Throne of Majesty, encompass'd by a numberless Multitude of Saints and Angels, that at the sight of thy Greatness tremble with Reverence, and struck with Wonder, cry without ceasing, Holy, Holy, Holy; nor satisfied with these Praises, they cover their Faces, and fall awfully prostrate

True Wisdom. 9

strate in thy Presence, as unwor-
thy to stand before thy Throne :
And whilst this Glorious Company
is adoring thee, and is swallow'd up
with profound Respect and Love ;
I, a most vile Worm, Affront and
Trample thee under Foot,

Thy Mercy, and my Malice, can
neither of them be greater ; thy
Mercy in Suffering, and my Malice
in Offending. I deserv'd, when I
sinn'd, that the Earth should no lon-
ger bear me, that the Elements
should no farther serve me, that the
Sun should no more shine on me, but
rather from every Ray dart Thun-
der at me. I deserve to have a Hell
made on purpose for me, I deserv'd
it, I deserv'd it ! Since the Fire,
that thy wrath has already kindled
suffices not to punish me. Yet in-
stead of all this, thou, O Lord, dost
offer me Pardon, and art the first
to make Peace with me. O Unheard
of Goodness ! O Patience worthy
of thee, O God, alone !

To correspond therefore in some
mea-

True Wisdom. 10

measure with so great Love; here all ye Saints of Heaven what I now firmly purpose and promise.

I resolve, were there no Hell at all, to detest Sin, as the greatest Evil, and that only because it is injurious to my God; and that, were I certain to go unpunish'd, I would not for all the World commit it again. For the future I will, O ye Blessed Spirits, consider yours and my God to be what he is; and infinite Good, Inestimable, Unchangeable, who alone by a boundless Ocean of Mercy, can swallow up the searchless Depths of my Malice. These Eyes, these unhappy Hands, this wretched Tongue, nay, this whole Body, that has been the Instrument of my Offences, shall be henceforth the Instrument of my Repentance.

Wherefore, O my God, for the sake of this thy Goodness, for the Honour of thy Name, for the Glory of thy Divine Promises, grant that it may be thus, and by adding Mercy to Mercy, so change my Heart,
that

True Wisdom. II

that I may for the Time to come
prove as Faithful as I have been
heretofore rebellious, and serve
thee as much as I have offended
thee, and that I may now begin to
do, and continue the same for
evermore. Amen, Pater Noster,
Glo. Ave, &c.

II. Consideration.

FOR
M O N D A Y.

*Some Circumstances that
aggravate Sin.*

I. Reflection.

The Place.

Consider, the Place where
you have sinn'd. It was
in the Presence of God that
saw

saw ye, before the Eyes therefore of your Law-giver have you violated the Law : In Sight of ydur Judge have you mock'd at his Punishments : Before your Redeemer have you trampled upon his Blood : In the Face of that infinite Majesty have you renounc'd his Friendship : You have made your self a Slave to his Enemy, and joyn-ing with him, have attempted to Dethrone your Lord : In a word, *You have sinn'd.*

Now if you think fit to sin for the future, find out a Palce where God may not see ye, how can ye otherwise have the rashness to commit Wickedness before the Omnipotent Lord, the Revenger of Sin, whose Eyes are purer than to behold Iniquity ! How can ye, I say, have the Rashness to commit, before your Creator, what you durst not do before your Fellow-creature ! Yet certainly, 'tis less to
sin

sin in the Presence of the whole World, than in the Sight of God alone.

II. Reflection.

The Time.

Consider, the Time you have offended God in. Tis since you become by Baptism his Child, after his so many times admitting you to the Sacraments, after your so often promising better in Confession, after the Son of God's having dy'd that you might sin no more, after so many Motives to forbear offending him, you have nevertheless offended him.

God created ye purely out of his own Goodness; he chose ye out of many that had they been created, would never perhaps have offended him: he brought ye forth in a Christian Country, where you might enjoy the true

True Wisdom. 14

true Light of the Holy Faith :
He now every moment pre-
serves ye ; provides ye Meat,
Cloaths, and a Home to go to ?
he ordains not only inferior
Creatures to be spent in your
Service, but employs the An-
gels themselves about ye. By
how many Inspirations does he
call upon ye, from how many
Dangers does he defend ye, and
how often does he forbear to
punish ye ?

For you he shed his Blood,
and for you he has his Body rea-
dy in the Treasures of his Grace,
all the Treasures of his Grace
stand open ; for you is prepar'd
the eternal Happiness of Pari-
dise. Of you he always thinks :
You he hugs in his Arms, you
he suckles at his Breast ; and all
this while, you by sinning do
your Benefactor the greatest
Injury you are capable of, and
rear as it were the very Paps
that give you Life. The brute
Beasts

True Wisdom. 15

Beasts themselves wou'd not
sure be so unnatural, but ra-
ther be asham'd shou'd any even
of their wild Herd appear gvil-
ty of so much Ingratitude.

III. Reflection.

The Means.

CONSIDER, what Helps you
have made use of to sin ;
you have not only sinn'd in the
Presence of God, and in his ve-
ry Arms, but have turn'd even
his own Benefits, as Weapons,
against him. Those Senses God
has given ye, for the Good of
your Soul in what have you
employ'd them ? Those Eyes,
those Hands that have so basely
been the Instruments of so ma-
ny crying Sins, that Body which
God has so often sanctified by
his own Body, and Real Pre-
sence ; what use have they all
been put to ?

God

True Wisdom. 16

God has given ye a Will capable of loving the Sovereign Good, and you despising the Fountain of Eternal Life, have sought after impure and muddy Streams. He has given ye an Understanding capable of knowing the Chief Truth; what use make you of it, but still to find out new Means of offending the Giver? Nay further; as if it were but a small matter to abuse the Creatures against God; we abuse the Creator himself against himself. *Thou hast made me to serve with thy Sins, thou hast try'd me with thy Iniquities. If. 43.*

Because God is good, because he is merciful, because he waits patiently, and defers Punishing, because he has instituted the Sacraments as a Remedy for your Sins, you therefore take the more Liberty to offend him and say with your self, I will commit this and tother Transgression,

True Wisdom. 17

gression, and then go and confess it : What a dreadful thing is this ! As if it were not enough for Man to betray God, by turning his own Creatures against him ; he will have God himself concur to this horrible Destruction, as it were, of himself.

The Prayer.

O Ocean of Bounty, O God, infinitely Holy, infinitely Just, and infinitely verse to Sin : Never did I come with more confusion to Prostrate myself at thy Feet than now, when I consider my black Ingratitude. As if it were but a small Thing to offend Thee before thy Face, a small Thing to offend Thee with thy own Favours ; I have made use even of thy self against thy self.

By the means of Faith, thou hast, O Lord, make known to me thy Mercy ; all thy Veins hast thou empty'd, to make me an easie and a healing Bath in the Holy Sacrament

18 True Wisdom.

of Penance, yet I, perverse and ungrateful Wretch, have perverted all these Helps, to transgress against thee, with less concern. The Better thou hast been to me, the worse have I prov'd to thee. Because thou hast made the means easie to cleanse me from my Sins, I have been the bolder in breaking thy Commands.

I shou'd at least have had some Shadow of Excuse for my Fault, but even that is wanting. What then has made me rebel against thee, O my Sovereign Benefactor; Have I been driven upon it, by some violent Necessity; Not at all, no, nor by the Temptation of any great Good; it has been, in a manner, Nothing that has mov'd me to Sin. The Devil promis'd me not, as he did thee in the Wilderness, all the Kingdoms of the World, if I would obey him? He promis'd me so short a Pleasure, that it vanish'd like a shadow; so vile a delight, that the very Darkness was ashamed, and even the Air

wou'd

True Wisdom.

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would be now infested at the Repeating of it. And to wallow in this loathsome Filth have I despis'd Thee the infinite Ocean of Eternal Sweetness: Yes, for this Little which can scarce be said to have been for this Little, have I disregarded thy Benefits, for this Little have I lost thy Favour, of which to have but the least degree, is more worth, than to be Master of Ten Thousand Worlds; and for this Little have I sinn'd in thy Presence, and Transgress'd against Thee.

This I have done, and yet, O Lord, I see thee with thy Arms open to receive me anew, if I do but heartily Repent. Since then it is thus lo I come to thee, and for the Love I have for that Goodness, which after having been so often abus'd by me, bears with and invites me, I abhor my Sins above all Evil, I acknowledge them as so many execrable Treasons against thy Majesty, I detest them as the Ingratitude of Hell.

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But tho' I am resolv'd, O my Sa-
viour, to change my Life; since I
cannot do it by my own Strength, I
implore thy Help; and humbly be-
seech thee by those gaping Wounds,
which like so many Mouths speak in
my behalf; by the Merits of thy
Blood, and by thy self, to permit me
no more to turn thy Favours into
Instruments of Iniquity, but that
thy Goodness, and the Remedies thou
hast left against my Sins, may
be new Motives to Love, and new
Engagements to serve thee more
faithfully. Amen. Pater, &c.
Ave, &c.

III. Con.

III. Consideration.

FOR TUESDAY

Sin makes us Enemies.

God Earth ever one another
But together all the Hated all

I. Reflection.

God hates Sin. A dominant
is to God. Yet this Sin, as he

CONSIDER the infinite hatred
God bears against Sin: If
the Will that runs after it's
own Good, mov'd to it by the
Passion of Love, does with the
same Pace fly from Evil, inclin-

ed so to do by the Passion of Hatred; it may well be said that as God is all Love; infinite Love, Love it self of his own immense Goodness, so must he be necessarily, all Hatred, infinite Hatred, Hatred it self of all Sin, and abomination beyond what can be express'd as contrary to his Goodness. Put together therefore all the Hatred the greatest Enemies upon the Face of the Earth ever bore one another; put together all the Hatred all the Devils and damn'd Souls in Hell bear God; and what does all that amount to? Alas! 'Tis but a Shadow of that infinite Abomination that Mortal Sin is to God. Yet this Sin, as horrible as it is, do you perhaps nourish in your Heart Month after Month, and caress it in your Bosom, as if it were not a Monster, but a pretty Companion to entertain you.

II. Reflection.

God hates the Sinner.

Consider, that God hates not only the Sin, but the Sinner too, as he is such, *The Sinner and the Sin*, says the Wise Man, *are like an Abomination to God*, Sap. 4 As he is a Sinner, God takes him for his Enemy. : By Reason of Sin he intends him Evil, and an eternal Evil of Punishment and Damnation.

Whilst Sin remains in such a Soul, God neither can nor will have any Friendship for it; he cannot accept any thing from it. Suppose that even the Holy Virgin had committed a mortal Sin, God wou'd then without doubt have hated his Mother worse than a Serpent, and had she dy'd in such a State, he wou'd forthwith have sentenc'd her with the other *Rebellious* Souls,

24 *True Wisdom.*

Souls to eternal Fire ; without making any Account of all her past Merits and Sanctity. After being full convinc'd of this plain Truth, how can we sufficiently conceive the prodigious Hatred God bears against a Sinner ?

Mark this incredible, but true thing ; by one mortal Sin of one Man, God is more displeas'd, than he is pleas'd with all the good Works past, present, and to come, of all the Saints together.

Return then to the Place, where, by most unworthy Actions, you trample under your Feet the Law of God ; return, but remember withal, that in those wicked Pleasures God finds more Disgust then he does Satisfaction in all the Prophets, Patriarchs and Apostles, in all the Martyrs, Confessors, and Virgins, nay, than in all the Saints and Angels in Heaven assembl'd
in

True Wisdom. 25

in one Quire, so that were God capable of Grief, your Sin alone wou'd afflict him more, than all their Obedience wou'd please him. What fear ye then, if you fear not Sin ! It were better certainly to be a dead Dog, a venomous Toad, a Basilisk or the most vile and most odious of Animals, than to be a Sinner.

III. Reflection.

The Influence from the two last Points.

REason thus with your self, God hates Sin infinitely, and I, for my part, love it better than I do my own Soul : God reckons more upon one mortal Sin, as to the evil of it, than he makes account of all the Praises and Services of his Creatures, in Respect of the Good thereof

26 True Wisdom.

and I esteem it so little, that I commit it for nothing? nay, after having committed it, I brag and pride my self therein and tell it as a great Exploit. To destroy Sin, God has fill'd with Marks of his Justice, Heaven, Earth and Hell, where to show, as on a Theatre, his infinite Hatred against one capital Offence alone, he deprives so many of his Creatures of an Infinite Good, which is, eternal Bliss, and inflicts upon them an Infinite Pain, which is, eternal Damnation; and I, in Sight of this God go about merrily, not with one only, but with many Sins upon my Conscience, I Laugh, Jest, Sleep and take the Air, and in gaudy Apparel, with costly Equipage, stalk along, as if the Ground were not good enough to bear me.

Who is mistaken then, God or I? Either God errs, or the World

8 True Wisdom.

behold thy Image: however disfigur'd it appears, Retouch the first Lines of thy own Hand: And let not my perverse Will be more powerful in arising, then thy Omnipotence in finishing them.

Prostrate before the Throne of thy Greatness, look down upon me miserable Wretch, begging Pardon for my Sins. With the whole Power of my free Will, I renounce and detest all these Crimes that make me thy Enemy, and hateful to thee. The love thou bearest me and the Hatred thou bearest my Sins, are the only Motives that draw from the Bottom of my Heart Tears of Repentance? and because they Equal not the Sea as I wish; accept the Hatred even thou thy self hast against Sin; supply thus the Sorrow that is wanting in me, and make up what, through my extreme Misery, I am deficient in.

Arisether, O Lord, and by the Everlasting Fountain of Goodness that flows from thy Breast, let my
Peace

True Wisdom. 29

Peace be this Day made with thee,
and remain for ever inviolable.
Henceforth miserable Sinner that
I am, I will obey thy Commands, I
will value thy Grace, and regard
thy Law. As the Supreme Lord
of All, assist me in all Temptation,
Remove me far from Dangers,
forget all past Enmity ; so that
serving thee, as is my Duty, in this
Life, I may merit to Love and En-
joy thee for ever hereafter. Amen.
Pater, &c. Ave, &c.

8 True Wisdom.

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True Wisdom. 29

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serving thee, as is my Duty, in this
Life, I may merit to Love and En-
joy thee for ever hereafter. Amen.
Pater, &c. Ave, &c.

IV. Consideration.

FOR

WEDNESDAY.

The Punishment of Sin.

I. Reflection.

*The Punishment of the
Angels.*

Consider the first Sin committed in the World, and the first Punishment for it. The Angels created out of nothing before all other Creatures, placed in the highest Heaven, endued with perfect Understanding,

True Wisdom. 31

standing, Wisdom, and Beauty, Immortal, Holy, Able to behold the Face of God, instead of being Subject to their Lord, do the Third Part of 'em Rebel against him: Behold therefore a Thunderbolt of the Divine Justice is darted at them, and involving 'em all under the same Sentence, strikes them down Headlong in a Moment to Hell.

But they are, O Lord, so numerous, that they exceed the Sands of the Sea! No matter, *they have sinn'd, let them all perish.* But they are, Lord, the most Beautiful Creatures thy Hands have made. *They are so, but they are spotted with Sin; away with 'em to Everlasting Fire.* But it is but One Sin, and that only in Thought: *'Tis true: but it is a Mortal One and that's enough to make me Hate and Abominate them to all Eternity.* Give them at least time to come to themselves.

selves again ; they have not before this seen an Example of thy Justice ; they were not threatned before-hand ; it will be thy Honour alone to take Pity on 'em ; they will render thee immortal Thanks ; by an infinite Obedience hereafter they will make amends for their Error. *There is no more to be said, God replies, they have sinn'd ; in this Moment therefore they tumble all Headlong into Hell.*

How Great and Infinite art thou, O Divine Justice, and yet Men Fear thee not ? The Princes of thy Palace are by thee condemn'd for One Sin, and yet the very Slaves go on sinning without Apprehension.

II. Reflection.

The Punishment of the first Man.

CONSIDER the first Sin of Man, which was *Adam's*,
and

True Wisdom, 33

and the mighty Train of Mischiefs that Sin brought into the World. Muster up a Body of all the Miseries that lay Siege to our Life: Put down Poverty, Diseases, Ignorance, Enmity, Famine, Tempests, Plagues, Dissentions, Wars, Massacres and Desolations. Heap up one upon another, the Bones of all the Dead that ever liv'd, and lifting up your Eyes with Wonder upon those vast Ruins, say, *So great is the Punishment of one Sin, one Sin alone has been the Gate, through which this huge Army of Ills has march'd into the World ! Had not Adam sinn'd ; Justice, Peace, Nature, Grace, all had been ours ; a most happy Life now, and a more happy one Eternally. What a great Evil then is Sin, since one irregular Torrent has brought down upon us an Inundation of all Evil ! Wherefore those Tears that*
now

now drop from so many, on account of their Tribulations, how much better would they be employed, were they shed for their Sins, which are the only Occasions of Tribulations?

But O accursed Sin, thou even in this too art like Poison, whose first Symptom is to take away the Sight; thou hinderst these most clear Truths from being discern'd.

III. Reflection.

The Punishment of one Sin.

CONSIDER, that all this Desolation is nothing, if compar'd to the eternal Pain a Soul endures in Hell, for one Sin. Look down then from the Brink of that horrid Furnace, and beholding so many Souls damn'd for the same Lewdness and Crimes you are guilty of,

nay,

True Wisdom. 35

may, even for less than those, cry out with Amazement, what, is a moment then of shameful Pleasure punish'd with an Eternity of unheard of Torments! Yes: such is the Malignity of Mortal Sin! 'Tis so immensely great, that it deserves to be punish'd by a Torment: that has no End; by an endless Death.

Above Five Thousand Years are past, since Cain has lain tossing on those Billows of devouring Flames, yet he sees no Shore; after so much Pain, not one Farthing of that great Debt contracted by his Sin, is yet discounted to him. Five Millions of Years, a Hundred Millions, a Hundred Thousand Millions more shall pass, and he shall still be to begin again.

God sees that Soul, made after his own Image, despairing in the Bottomless Pit of Brimstone? he hears its Groans and Shrieks,

Shrieks, yet has not one jot of Compassion for it: His Bowels so tender; that they provide Sustainance even for the least Pismire, are now so hardned, that they feel no Concern at the eternal Misery of a Creature once his Child. What Gall must that be, of which one Drop alone is able to imbitter an Ocean of Honey for ever? That Gall is Sin.

All this may seem very strange; but you may go further yet; for in Hell, Sin is never sufficiently punish'd. Shou'd God shower down upon one Soul alone, all that Tempest of Wrath, he lets fall continually upon all the Devils and Damn'd, 'twou'd be still but little in respect of what one Sin deserves. The Arm of Divine Justice cannot lay so heavy a Blow upon a Sinner but it will always want Weight, and be found light in Comparison of the Crime. Who

True Wisdom. 37

Who can now after all this remain insensible of what it is to offend an Infinite God ! For blacker Colours cannot be well brought, to paint more to the Life the frightful Face of one Mortal Sin.

The Prayer.

No ; I did not, O Lord, understand till now the monstrous Malignity of my Sins : 'Tis but too true, I did not understand it : I was one of those, that knew not what they do, when they offend thee. If I had ever fully understood, that Hell, as horrible as it is, is but a Shadow of Evil in Comparison of Sin, which alone is truly an Evil ; if I had conceiv'd, that to keep a sinful Soul in eternal Fire, is to show Mercy to it, and to punish it still infinitely less than it deserves, if I had conceived this, how could I ever have sin'd ;

What now has hinder'd me from going to experience these most certain Truths, in that terrible Night
that

What shall never see Day? How
 near have I been falling into that
 horrible Pit, while I have been so
 many times upon the Edge of it;
 Wherefore to thee are the Thanks
 due, O Lord, that hast had Pity on
 me, after having shewn thy Justice
 on others, that have provok'd thee
 less than I have done.

And after so much Mercy, shall
 I offend thee again? O permit it
 not; by suffering me to chuse that
 Infinite Bounty which deserves the
 Love of all Hearts. I have been
 but too blind already. O that it
 were in my Power to undo what
 I have done: I would willingly
 undo it, whatever it cost me.

Thou, O Lord that hast hitherto
 shewn thy Mercy towards a Sinner,
 shew now thy Power against Sin:
 Destroy it, Annihilate it: not so
 much because it is hurtful to me,
 as for its being contrary to thee,
 and the only Enemy thou most ha-
 test; so being sav'd from the double
 Evil,

True Wisdom. 39

Evil both of the Punishment, and
of the Crime, I shall praise thy
Name in Heaven for evermore.
Amen. Pater noster, &c. Ave
Maria, &c.

THURSDAY

in the morning

of the

I. Reflection.

The Day is always along
with us.

Consider what an immense
Debt you contract with
God, when you sin mortally.
On the one side, Divine Justice
will

V. Con-

V. Consideration.

FOR

THURSDAY.

*Sin punish'd in the Person
of Christ.*

I. Reflection.

*The Debt Sin brings along
with it.*

CONSIDER what an immense
Debt you contract with
God, when you sin Mortally.
On the one side, Divine Justice
will

True Wisdom. 41

will be satisfied, and cries out, *Pay what thou owest*, on the other, who is ever able to satisfy it? Shou'd all the Saints join in their Prayers, shou'd all the Martyrs concur with their Blood, shou'd all the Angels intervene with their Love, nay, shou'd the Mother of God herself interpose with all her Merits; this Satisfaction altogether wou'd not be able to discharge one Mortal Sin.

Imagin further, that God with the same Omnipotent Word by which he created this World out of nothing, shou'd create as many more Worlds as there are Sands in the Sea, and shou'd fill them all with Holy Souls, every one of which shou'd in Goodness excel the Queen of Saints, the most Holy Virgin; I say without going a Tittle from the Truth, that if all these Holy Souls shou'd for a Thousand Ages cloath
C them-

42 True Wisdom

themselves with Sackcloth,
Cover themselves with Ashes,
Sleep upon the Ground, Fast,
Implore God's Mercy, Shed all
the Blood of their Veins, Sa-
crifice themselves in a Burnt-
offering; thou'd all these good
Works and as many more as
you please to add, be put into
the most equal Scale of Divine
Justice, they wou'd not weigh
so much as one grievous Sin
alone, or ever reach a Sum
great enough to pay this Debt,
thou'd they be continually mul-
tiply'd a thousand times over.
To understand this the bet-
ter, you must know, that Sin,
by its being Injurious to an In-
finite Majesty, contracts a cer-
tain Infinity of Malice, and
such an immense Deformity,
that it cannot be cancell'd by
any Homage of the Creature.

II Re-

II. Reflection.

Christ Pays this Debt.

Consider that you being unable to Pay this Debt, God himself came to pay it, and becoming Man, by an Excess of Bounty took upon him to satisfy the Score, for the Discharge of which, an infinite Treasure of Merits was necessary. And tho' to this End, it had been more than enough, for Christ to have sent but one Sigh towards Heaven; yet to demonstrate the Hatred he bore to Sin, and to make a true Estimate of the Greatness of the Disease, by the Price of its Cure, he underwent so many internal and external Pains, that they are not to be comprehended; nor did the Prophet, that saw only a kind of Shadow thereof, know what other Name to give them,

44 *True Wisdom.*

then that of a vast Sea, where no Boundary or Shore is to be discover'd.

Place your self but a little before a Crucifix, and Contemplate our Saviour Tormented in all the Senses, each of which has its particular Pain: Tormented in all his Members, so that from the Sole of the Foot to the Crown of the Head, there is no found Part in him; Tormented by all sorts of Persons, who, however divided among themselves join'd still without Pity in afflicting him. Consider a little what it is to have a Body of so tender and delicate a Constitution, Beaten and Torn with so many Blows and Stripes, and by Executioners most cruel, both by Nature, and the Instigation of the Devil, think what it is to have one's Head pierc'd all over with a Crown beset with Thorns; what it is to hang Agonizing
Three

True Wisdom. 45

Three Hours by Three Nails,
and to expire at last upon a
Cross, Naked, Forsaken, and
Comfortless!

One Thorn in a Lion's Foot,
makes him roar with Mad-
ness; now what a Pain must
it have been, to hang by those
Nails so long, by the Weight
of one's whole Body, to hold
up all that Time one's Head
stuck with so many Thorns, to
pour all one's Blood out of so
many Wounds!

Add to all these great Pains,
the Reproaches; the Scoffs; the
Blasphemies; and much more
those Inward, and Incompara-
bly greater Torments, that
pierc'd the Heart of the Son of
God; and measure them with
the Measure of the Love he
bore his Father, and of the
Hatred he bore to Sin.

Some Doctors write, that
Christ suffer'd as much Pain as
all the Sins of the World,

46 True Wisdom.

present, and to come, deserv'd to be punish'd with temporally in this Life; without looking upon the Value his Suffering receiv'd from his Divinity, but intending only that the Debt and the Payment shou'd have some Proportion and Equality as to his humane Nature.

If this be true who can ever fully conceive his Passion? Who can sound the Bottom of this Gulph? Certain it is, that without a great Miracle, Christ cou'd not have lived so long amidst so many Pains; but that Lord, who to save the Faithful from Suffering, does so often work Miracles, wou'd work 'em in himself, by suffering thus, even beyond all Belief.

III. Reflection.

What may be inferr'd from the two preceding Points.

Reason thus with your self if Sin were a Laughing Matter,

True Wisdom. 47

Matter, a Jest, or a Business to
divert the Company with, can
it be imagin'd that God would
ever have done so much to de-
stroy it, that he wou'd have
proceeded so far as to punish it
with such Rigour, not only in
Man that committed it, but e-
ven in his Innocent Son, who
paid the Score for others to
Certain it is, the divine Ju-
stice has given the World a
greater Demonstration of Ri-
gour, by one only Stroke laid
upon the Body of Christ, than
if he had dash'd the Stars to
pieces, and confounded the E-
lements, and thrown down
Headlong both Men and An-
gels into Hell; because the
Death of a God, bears no Pro-
portion with the Ruine of all
the Creatures: Now what must
we conceive, not of a slight
Stroke, but of the overwhelm-
ing of this God, made
in an Ocean of Ignominy

48 True Wisdom.

Torments? O how different is therefore the Reckoning of Sin made in Heaven, from that made of it in this World of Darknes and Ignorance! O how unlike to ours, is the Balance of Divine Justice, which cannot be unequal!

Weigh then well two most important Truths; the first is, that if you Sin after the Death of Christ you again (as the Holy Ghost by the Mouth of S. Paul says) *Crucifie him afresh*; Heb. 6. The Reason is, because the Offence you commit against God is such that if it were expiated by a just Severity, no less a Satisfaction would be requisite, than that which was made by the divine Justice upon Mount Calvary; so that in your Heart dealt with Sin, Christ finds a new his Scourges, his Thorns, his Nails, the Treasons, the Insults, the Accusations, the Condemnation, and the Cross.

The

True Wisdom. 49

The Second Truth is, that when you sin, you make void, on your Part, the Force of the Passion of Jesus; and so render ineffectual, the greatest Work the infinite Love of God could do to save us. This Consideration forc'd Tears from the bottom of the Heart of Christ upon the Cross, seeing that his Death, most sufficient of it self to save all, shou'd be effectual for so few; and that Sin which he with so much Pain endeavour'd to destroy, shou'd still find so great a Refuge in the Breast of many Sinners, who, through their own Fault make useless the Means appointed for their Salvation.

The Prayer.

If ever thou dost shew thy self a God of Mercy, now is the time to appear so, O my Jesus, my Creator, my Redeemer and my whole
C 5 *Happi-*

50 True Wisdom.

Happiness. In thy Divine Presence, thou beholdest a Monster of Ingratitude and Wickedness : After having dy'd on a Cross, what couldst thou have done more for me miserable Creature; Wert thou to purchase thy Kingdom and thy Power, never couldst thou do it at a dearer rate, than that where with thou hast purchased my Salvation.

How were the Supreme Seraphims of Heaven amaz'd at the Sight of a God Crucified between Two Thieves ; at the Dying of a God, and Dying with so many Contusions, with so many Reproches, overwhelmed with Pains inexplicable ! With what Wonder ought the Heavenly Choir to be swallow'd up at so unexpected an Excess of Charity, that could not be contained but in a Breast of Infinite Love !

But behold new Matter of Wonder ; an Excess of Goodness indeed on one side, but a Miracle of Ingratitude on the other ! After so much

True Wisdom.

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much Suffering, so much Blood, what hast thou, O Lord, profited ; Thou art not yet come so far as to gain my Heart. How extremely confounded am I ? After thy Dying for me, I have been capable of turning my Back upon thee, of Wounding thee afresh, and Trampling on thy Blood, by new Offences.

Could I now feel a Sorrow equal but to my Ingratitude ; I should then at least render thee Repentance for Love, and Tears for Blood : But therein am I also wanting. No other Remedy therefore remains, but to recur to thee, to desire this Sorrow, and to beg it of thee with all my Heart.

Thou see'st, O Lord, that I deserve it not ; but thou see'st also, that without thee, I cannot arrive to it, Of my self I can fall, but cannot rise again : I can go far from thee, but cannot return to thee ; I can sin, but cannot repent. Thou that art the true Lover of my Soul, add this Mercy to thy

52 True Wisdom.

thy other Mercies; stretch out thy Hand, raise me up, and sustain me.

Transported with thy Charity I esteem and love thee above all Good; and for the pure Love of thee, I, above all Evil, abhor Sin; I abominate it, I detest it as the Occasion of thy Sufferings, and Death: Let then those Wounds that were open'd for my Salvation, speak now in my Favour; let them obtain Mercy for me, and Grace to die, rather than offend thee again. Amen. Pater Noster, &c. Ave Maria, &c.

IV. Consideration.

FOR

FRIDAY

Of Death.

I. Reflection.

What Death is.

Consider, what Death is.
 Death is a perpetual Separation from all this World,
 Know therefore, that in a short time you must leave all that is Dear to you in this Life. You must

54 *True Wisdom.*

must leave Relations , Children, Friends and Estate ; you must leave your brutish Pleasures ; you must leave the House you live in, without Hopes of ever seeing It more, you must go into another Country ; O how different from this ! Where all that is so much valued by us here, is worth nothing at all.

Shortly will come that fatal Day, when you shall be alive in the Morning, and dead at Night ? or alive at Night, and dead in the Morning : You shall be put into your Coffin, carried to the Burying-Place, thrown into a Grave, and shall be no more thought of. Your Body wrapt up in a poor Shroud, Disfigur'd, Ghastly, and Noisom, shall be eaten by Vermin, and these shall be your Friends, your Company and your Bed. Behold the End of this frail Flesh that is treated

ed

True Wisdom. 55

ed so delicatly, and made so much of, and pampered with so many Dainties. All Places far and near are ransack'd to serve up at last a Banquet to the Worms.

Speak now, are not all these things true that are represented to ye ? Here is no Exaggeration, nothing but what you see with your own Eyes. For your own sake therefore I beseech ye, that every Night before you go to Sleep, as you lye all along, with your Eyes shut, your Feet stretch'd out, and your Hands upon your Breast, say thus with your self ; Just so shall I in a little time be in my Coffin, and yet I think not of it, but live as if I were never to Die.

II. Reflection.

Death is certain and uncertain.

Consider, that this Separation, which we call Death, is certain, and uncertain: Certain it is that it will come. That Princes, and Kings, and Emperors must fall, in one common heap with the poorest Beggars. In this large Field, Death does at the same time, with one and the same Scythe, mow down the Flowers and the Grass. But who knows how and when he shall be cut down; Say, can ye tell at what Hour, and in what manner your Soul shall quit your Body? Shall ye die in the Day-time or in the Night; this Year or the next? And what is of greater Importance, shall ye have time to Confess? shall ye have a Confessor to help ye? shall you

ye have made up well your Accounts, e'er you appear before the Judge who is to examine them? Shall ye be strong enough against that last Assault the Devil with all his Forces will make upon ye? We know, alas, nothing further but that we must Die; and that very quickly, and when we don't think on't.

If God shou'd by an Angel, reveal that you were to Die within a Year; O how many Devotions, how many Penances, how many Good Works wou'd you perform; And may it not happen that this very next Month you may be in your Grave; Where then are the Penances, where the Good Works you should do now? Nothing is thought of but the settling your self in this wretched Inn, from whence you are so soon to be gone. I will, (say you) indulge my self
this

58 True Wisdom.

this Pleasure, that Injury I will revenge, such and such a thing I will purchase. In the meanwhile comes Death, and breaks all your Aim and Measures, and destroys all the visionary Projects of your Imagination. What greater Folly then can there be, than to think always on what will so quickly end, and never to think on what will never have an end?

III. Reflection:

We Die but once.

CONSIDER, that this Separation from all that you now see, this vast Step from our World to the next, is made only once; so that if but that once you make a false one, 'tis never to be recover'd. Either the Tree falls to the South, or to the North; *Where-ever it falls,* says our Saviour, *there will*

True Wisdom. 59

will it lie for ever. What Care therefore ought all Christians to take, that they may fall on the right Hand ; but to fall on the Right when you Die, you must not while you Live, incline to the Left. To Live ill and to Die well, is an Undertaking most difficult for a Sinner to succeed in ; yet how many, blinded with a wilful Ignorance ; imagine it easy ! The Reason of this Difficulty it ; because Death is nothing else but the last part of Life. So that both are usually of the same Complexion. If the first Part of a piece of Cloath be Black, if the Middle be Black too, 'twould be somewhat strange, shou'd the Remaining Part prove White ; 'tis but too true then, that who Lives ill, Dies ill,

And what is it you do now to Die well ? What Care do you take in aiming at that Mark, where

True Wisdom. 60

where the missing of the *White*, will be the loss of all your Happiness for ever? From Morning to Night you defile your Soul with a Thousand Uncleanesses, from the Beginning of the Year to the End you Live in Mortal Sin; and d'ye think thus to come to a Good Death? You cannot expect it.

But if you will secure your Salvation, change your Course of Life; which you must do, or reckon to perish. *What a Man has sown, that shall he reap, Gal. 6.* Who Lives ill, Dies ill,

The Prayer.

O most Wise God that knowest all my Infirmities, and that canst alone heal them; with how great Providence hast thou ordain'd, that the Day of my Death should be conceal'd from me, that so being ignorant of the Ambushes of my Enemy,

True Wisdom. 61

my, I may Live always with Care and Circumspection, standing to my Arms every Day, as if it were to be the Day, of Combat, and the Last of my Life. To this very End hast thou so often in the Holy Scriptures, inculcated this Truth, That Death should come as a Thief, when it is least thought of. Of this thou convincest me experimentally every Hour, whilst I so often, and so unexpectedly, behold my Companions and Acquaintance Die before my Face.

Yet what am I the better for all these Warnings; Tho' I am sure Death is on the Way to assault me. Tho' I know every Moment it advances nearer and nearer. I nevertheless, like a senseless Beast led to the Slaughter, sport and play with the Rope about my Neck, as if I shou'd never come to the Place of Execution.

How little do I, O Lord, prepare for that last Step, which has made even thy greatest Saints tremble?

True Wisdom. 62

tremble? What Care do I take, by Alms, Prayers, and Penances, to lay up Provision in that Country, where I shall find none, but what I my self have sent before? Instead of providing for an everlasting Dwelling, I think of nothing but of Building me a House on this Quicksand, where it already shakes, and will in a little time most certainly tumble down.

Thou hast, O Lord, stop't all the Passages, thro' which I might fly from thee, and yet I escape out of thy Hands. If I quit not the present good things of this Life for Love of thee, I ought at least to quit them because they themselves glide away, and slip out of my Arms at the very grasping at 'em. Thus it is, O my Sovereign Good; but if for the time past I have been so blind, I will not be so for the future. I am sensible thou now givest me Time to Live, only that I may prepare to Die, and that like a Soldier I may exercise at the Review, before

True Wisdom. 63

before I enter into the Battel. To this end alone therefore will I spend the rest of my Days, this shall be my greatest Concern, and the only one of Importance! Help me then, O my God, by thy most efficacious Grace, to despise all that passes away; and grant that it may never more be truly said of me, that thou hast given me time to repent, and I have made no better use of it, than to sin on against thee, Amen. Pater Noster, &c. Ave Maria, &c.

VII. Consideration.

FOR

SATURDAY.

The Particular Judgment.

I. Reflection.

The Criminal.

CONSIDER the Criminal brought to Judgment; thy Soul will be this Criminal, that in the very Instant, and in the very Place where it shall be separated from the Body, shall
see

True Wisdom. 65

see the Terrible Tribunal set up, where Sentence must pass upon it. Thither alone, without any Relations; or Friends, or Servants; without Honours, or Riches, or Counsel; with its Guardian Angel on one side, as Witness, and with the Devil on the other, as Accuser; with its good Works and with its bad Ones, shall it in a Moment be brought.

Where then will these Companions be, for Love of whom you offended God; No body will appear, No body will answer for ye? O the dreadful Condition of a poor Sinner, that lying under the Weight of so many Iniquities, that having Resisted so many Inspirations; having been Guilty of so great Ingratitudes and Omissions, that Trembling with Doubt and Horror between Heaven and Hell, expects that Judge, who has been so much

D. of

66 True Wisdom,

offended, and that Sentence which admits no Appeal! And all this you will find come upon ye in a short Time.

Who knows but the very Place, where you now read these Lines, even the Place where you have so often Sinned, may quickly be the deadly Scene of what is now represented to ye.

Thole very Walls, perhaps, may in a Moment discover your Wickedness: And yet you reflect not, but Sin on, without any Concern or Regard at all.

II. Reflection.

The Judge.

CONSIDER the Person of the Judge. To this Judgment the Lord will come, no longer Meek and Humble, as a Lamb to take away your Sins; but fierce and Terrible as a Lion

True Wisdom. 67

to execute Vengeance on them, and to shew that his Justice is as Infinite as his Mercy. Who will be so Intrepid as not to Tremble before a Judge of Infinite Knowledge not to be deceiv'd ; of Righteousness to hate Sin ; and of Infinite Power, to punish it as it deserves !

With the Brightness of his very Countenance he will lay open at one View the whole Series of our Iniquities ; the Sins of our Childhood, of our Youth, of our Riper Years, and even those of our Old Age, when Sin wou'd have left us, and yet we wou'd not leave Sin. Then will appear so much Good done, with sinister and crooked Intentions, our Abuse of the Sacraments, our Irreverences in the Church, and Profanation of Holy Days. So much Good left undone ; That might have been

D 2

68 True Wisdom.

been done. Time unprofitable Spent; Inspirations Rejected; so much that shou'd have been Distributed among the Poor, Thrown away in Vanity, in Gaming, and in Lewdness: So many Sins that might have been prevented, and were not; particularly by these that have the Care of others. as by Parents, and by Masters, and by Curates: So that to be thrown into the Fire, as an unprofitable Tree, it is not necessary to have brought forth Bad Fruit, it is enough, not to have brought forth Good. *I was Hungry, say our Saviour, and you gave me no Meat, I was Thirsty and you gave me no Drink, Naked and you Cloathed me not, Sick, and you Visited me not, Mat.*

25.

III. Reflection.

The Sentence.

CONSIDER the Sentence, the Trial being over, comes the fatal Doom, that Last and Irrevokable Sentence, which Jesus Christ shall pronounce in these Terms, Depart from me, O cursed Soul into Everlasting Fire, thou art not worthy to stand in my Presence, nor to enter into my Glory, Depart, I say, into Everlasting Fire, according to thy Deserts. Go, to accompany those evil Spirits, whom thou hast so much obey'd; be gone, for I deliver thee up wholly into their Power, and this my Blood design'd for thy Salvation, must now serve for thy Condemnation.

At this dreadful Sound, the Sinner forsaken by his Guardi-

70 *True Wisdom.*

an Angel, and made a Prey to Satan, shall from the Bed he dies in, tumble Headlong into the Bottomless Pit. What will that unhappy Soul then say at its first Entrance into Hell; at the Sight of those dismal Gates, that will thenceforward be for ever shut upon it; at the hearing of the Cries of the Tormented, and of the Tormentors; and at the feeling of those devouring Flames and everlasting Fire?

O unhappy Me! will it say, what have I Lost, and what have I Found? I might have been for ever Happy with the Angels and Saints, and I must now be for ever Tormented with these Devils. For me was the Glory of the Blessed provided, for me was that Inheritance prepar'd, for me was the Blood of Christ shed to purchase it? but I, senseless Fool that I was, have for a Frolick, or, for a shameful Pleasure

True Wisdom. 7F

Pleasure, chang'd all into Eternal Misery. O accursed Sins, O accursed Pleasures, O accursed Demons, that have deceiv'd me! O accursed Day, that brought me forth! There is an End then of all Mercy for me to all Eternity; all Hope is Lost; no more Good to be expected!

Then shall the Sinner know what Sin is, tho' he is not now sensible of it. Like the Fish, he finds not what it is, to be caught in the Net, while the Net is in the Water, but learns it to his Cost, when 'tis drawn A shore.

On the other Side, who can Express the Joy of that Soul, that having been Dutiful and Obedient, is put into Possession of Paradise? How does it bless the time of having Work'd out its Salvation; of having perform'd Penances, and of having

True Wisdom. 72

ving resisted the Allurements of the Tempter ; but who, I say, can express all this, when it cannot be so much as conceiv'd? Set then these two Sentences one against the other, chuse which you like best. 'Tis yet in your Power to determine.

The Prayer.

O Lord Jesus, that art the most just Searcher of Hearts, were it in my Power to Chuse a Judge in the Cause of my Eternity, I wou'd chuse none but thee, that hast an infinite Love for me, and desirest nothing more than my Salvation. Yet how ought I at the same time to apprehend that very Love, and to fear the long Patience thou hast had with me?

At this Distance, I perceive not how Great thou art? thy Love I see, but I see not thy Justice, but when thou shalt arise to judge, what will

True Wisdom. 73

will then become of me! I shall then understand with how great reason the Just themselves were afraid of thy Tribunal, and how great a Fool I was, not to fear it; I shall then find, that as the Love thou didst bear me was infinite, so was the Hatred infinite thou didst bear against my Sin. What, alas, shall I then do; If the Just shall scarcely be sav'd, where shall the Sinner appear; 1 Pet. 4.

How often have I deserv'd the last terrible Sentence? How many times has my Name been put down among the Reprobate? And after all, how stands it at this present with my Conscience. If I were just now summon'd before thy Divine Tribunal, how shou'd I be able to give up my Accounts; since through my extreme Folly, I spend the Time given me for that purpose, in contracting new Debts with thy Divine Justice?

But there's an End; I will not henceforth be so blind, as I have

True Wisdom. 74

been. At thy Judgment seat nothing can, I know, hurt me, but Sin; and nothing can help me but Good Works; wherefore I solemnly protest, that I hate all Sin for the Love of thee. I hate it as it is infinitely odious to thee; and renouncing all Criminal Pleasures, I will from this Moment begin to lead the Life of a true Christian, and endeavour by Prayers, Penances and Alms, to obtain a happy Sentence.

But thou, O God, that shall one Day be my Judge, and art now my Father, graciously stretch forth thy Hand to help me, blot out my Sins, and forgive me my Debts, before the Hour comes to require them with Rigour. Amen. Pater Noster, &c. Ave Maria, &c.

VIII. Consideration.

FOR

SUNDAY.

Of Hell.

I. Reflection.

What Hell is.

CONSIDER what Hell is.
Hell is a most unhappy
Place, full of all that is Ill, and
void of all that is Good. As the
Damned have made use of every
one of the Senses and Faculties
in

76 True Wisdom.

in offending God, so in all the Senses and Faculties are they most horribly punish'd.

The *Eyes* are most grievously tormented with the Horror of the Prison, with the Smoke of the Fire, with the beholding the other infernal Spirits and Demons, ev'ry one of which is so frightfully monstrous, that St, *Catherine of Siena* having seen but a faint kind of Resemblance thereof, tells us, in her Dialogues, that rather then meet with such another Sight, *She wou'd chuse to walk barefoot on a red hot Pavement, till the Day of Judgment.*

The *Ears* will hear nothing but Groans, Sighs, and Curses, Blasphemies, Wailing, and Gnashing of Teeth. One cannot with Patience endure the crying of an Infant in Pain, what then will it be, to be surrounded with the most horrible Discords and Shriekings of the Damned?

The

The *Smell* will be most extremely offended with the horrid Stench of the Place, with the unsufferable Fumes of the Brimstone, and with the most noisome Sent of the unhappy Bodies themselves, one of which alone, as St. *Bonaventure* says, *would be enough to infect the whole Earth.*

The *Taste* will be imbittered with the Gall and Poison of Asps, Tormented with perpetual Hunger and Thirst ; for the asswaging of which, what is now most loathsome and offensive, will then be long'd for, and yet will not be had.

Now what can be said of the *Feeling*, which as it usually offends God, more then all the other Senses, so shall it suffer more then all of them ; What do we talk of Chelicks, Convulsions, Racks, Wheels, or Burnings ; Other Sort of Burnings, other kind of Tor-
ments

78 *True Wisdom*

tures shall we find in Hell, if we Die in Mortal Sin. All Torments here pass, as in a Dream; and our Fire, compar'd with that, is but as a Painted one,

Now, what a Change will it be to see a Rich Voluptuous Man in the Morning Alive, in his Down-bed, at ended and fear'd; and to find him at Night Dead, plung'd in Flames, trodden under Foot by Devils, Curs'd by his Companions, raging and struggling, without Power to turn so much as on the other side! What a Torment will it be to have all past Pleasures turn'd into so many Pains, without Hopes of Remedy? The *Understanding*, blinded with Ignorance, will be able to think of nothing, but what does most excessively afflict. The *Will*, obstinate in Evil, will always Rage and Despair without being

True Wisdom. 79

being able to avoid its Punishment, will always hate, without Power to hurt, and ever will desire what it can never attain to.

This is the woful End the Paths of Sin lead to ? what think ye of it ? and can ye yet walk in it securely, and without Apprehension.

II. Reflection.

It is Eternal.

CONSIDER, that all this Mass of Miseries, wou'd be as nothing, were they to come once to an End ; but what an immense Weight is added to it by Eternity ! If in Hell, a Body were to suffer a little Tooth-ach only ; nay, were there no other Pain then to lye for ever in the same Posture on a Bed of Roses, it wou'd be a greater
Pu-

80 *True Wisdom.*

Punishment than to burn in a Fire many Thousand of Years, and to see then an End of ones Misery. Nor is there any Doubt of this Truth, when we consider the Terms of *Finite* and *Infinite*, between which there is no manner of Proportion. A Pain, how inconsiderable soever it is in it self, becomes immense, by adding Eternity to it.

Now what will it be to suffer Torments extreme, both in their Intensity and Continuance. If even our very Pleasures and Diversions become tedious, when they are too long, what will it be to burn in Everlasting Fire ? O Eternity ! Eternity ! How little do Men understand, and how little do they fear thee. What ! If I unhappily fall into this Pit, after I have with my Tears made a Sea greater than our Ocean ; shall not there be
pass

81 True Wisdom.

past a moment of my Pain ?
What ! After so many Millions
of Ages shall be finish'd, as there
are Sands and Drops in the Sea,
Leaves on the Trees, and Stars
in the Firmament, must Millions
of countless Millions yet remain ?
O Eternity ! Eternity ! And yet
(I must again say) Men fear
thee not ; but laden with Sin,
and holding only by a small
Thread of this miserable Life,
they boldly sport and divert
themselves upon the very Brink
of this great Precipice. What
prodigious Madness is it then to
believe as we believe, and yet to
Live as we Live !

III. Reflection.

You have deserv'd it.

CONSIDER how many Years
you have deserv'd to have
been bury'd in this Pit of Eter-
nal Fire, and how many are
Tor-

82 *True Wisdom.*

Tormented in it already for lesser Faults than yours. 'Tis therefore the Mercy alone of God, that has preserv'd ye from so horrible a Precipice? had he left ye in your Sins, where had ye now been? You had been Weeping and Wailing among these Devils; you had been a Despairing among these Flames. Cursed be my Body, (had ye been saying) that for a momentary Satisfaction has brought me to eternal Misery. O Pride, O Riches, O abominable Pleasures! What have I gotten by ye? Behold, for a Shadow of vain Happiness I now burn, and shall do so for ever?

By a little Penance, by leaving off such a Practice, by making such a Restitution, such a Reconciliation, I might have been deliver'd from these Flames; but now I can never be. One half Hour only of that Time, which I mis-spent in Vanity, in Amours,

True Wisaom. 83

in Lewdness; one half Hour only, wou'd I purchase with the Punishment of a Thousand Ages, in this Fire, and yet cannot I obtain it.

After this manner, had ye been a Lamenting, nor wou'd God have given Ear to your Groanes, or been mov'd with Pity towards ye. Never had ye been in a Capacity of beholding the unconceivable Beauty of your Creator; never more wou'd the Blood, and Passion, and Death of Jesus have been of any Benefit to ye.

Now if God gives ye yet Time, to what end does he gives it ye? Is it to go on Sinning, to spend it in Play, in Gluttony, and in Lewdness? No; he gives it ye only to Repent. And, *if you do not repent, you shall perish.* Luc. 13. God himself says so. Your Sentence there-

84 True Wisdom.

therefore is only deferr'd, not chang'd. Either you must Repent, or Burn.

The Prayer

And can it be, O most Righteous God, that with all thy Threats of an Eternal Punishment, I am not yet come to fear thee? Does not the Prospect of an Everlasting Fire make me yet sensible, how much thou hatest Sin; and what a great Trespass it is for a Creature to offend thee, the Creator of all things? How cou'd I be so excessively mad and foolish as to be thy Enemy, tho' but for a Moment; But I have been so, not only a Moment, but whole Months and Years together; with Mortal Sin upon my Conscience, I have been able to take my Rest and Pleasure quietly. O most unconceivable Stupidity and Madness! I have, O Lord, deserv'd that thou should'st without any more ado, have permitted the Execution of that Sentence, which for my Amendment,

True Wisdom. 85

ment, thou hast deferr'd so long ; 'tis true, I have deserv'd it, but thou O Merciful God, hast, with an excess of Goodness, overpower'd my Wickedness.

Arise then, O my Saviour, be not ye weary of bearing with me ; lo, I throw my self into the Arms of thy Mercy ; thou that with so much Pains didst follow me, when I fled from thee, drive me not away now I lye prostrate at thy Feet ; yet save that Soul that has cost thee so dear ; Strengthen me so as to shun Sin, that alone leads to the Regions of Death ; give me Grace to fear Hell, only because it separates me from thee : Wash away with thy Blood that Sentence, by which I have so often stood condemn'd ; so shall I be an Eternal Trophy of thy Bounty, and shall sing forth thy Praises and Mercies for evermore. Amen. *Pater Noster, &c. Ave Maria, &c.*

Consideration.

UPON

CONFESSIO*N*.

I. Reflection.

Before Confession.

Consider that as it is not enough for a good Judge to Arrain, and Commit the Criminal; unless he awards Execution against him; so it is not enough for a good Confession to plead Guilty, and condemn your Sins, except, by a thorough Sorrow, you utterly destroy and put an end to them; and in this Sorrow does the Validity of
Con-

True Wisdom. 87

Confession essentially consist; nor will the Desire of it suffice, you must have it in good earnest; and the want of it cannot be supply'd any other way neither; till you hate Sin, there is no Peace to be made with God, no Pardon to be had.

Now this Sorrow is to be obtain'd by begging it humbly and frequently, through the Merits of our Saviour, and by reading and weighing the Grievousness of Sin touch'd upon in this Manual. But endeavour all you can that this Sorrow may be perfect, that is, such a one as proceeds, not so much from the Fear of Hell, or the Hope of Heaven, or the Deformity of Sin, as from the Sense you have, that Sin offends God, and is Injurious to his Supreme Majesty, and contrary to that Infinite Bounty that deserves the Love of All.

Nor

88 True Wisdom.

Nor will this your Sorrow yet avail, without another Condition annex'd to it ; it must be effectual, that is to say, Accompany'd with a firm Purpose never to commit Mortal Sin more, upon any Account whatsoever ; neither for the avoiding any Evil, or acquiring any Good. Wherefore it is not sufficient to say, I *would* amend my Life ; you must say, I *will* ; for of such as would, Hell is full, as Heaven is, of such as will. And of this Resolution alone the Devil is afraid, when ye go to Confession ; so that as he then turns all his Forces upon ye to hinder it, so ought you to apply your whole Power to make it, begging God Almighty's Succour, by whose Grace all things are possible.

Above all, you are to know, that this Resolution must be strong enough to make you avoid

void the more immediate Occasions of Sinning ; to wit, those dangerous Temptations under which you are used to Fall when you put your self into them. If such a House where you pass away your time, or even where your Business lies ; if such a Woman you have an Acquaintance with, and Friendship for, gives you an Occasion of Sin ; either leave off going to Confession, or make a sincere Resolution, to shun, if possible, that Occasion, whatever it may be, that puts ye in the way of returning to your Wick- edness.

Say not, 'tis enough if you promise to Sin no more, what matter is it otherwise to break off this and t'other Acquaintance or Familiarity ; say not so, because that wou'd be to make a Law after your own Fashion, and not to observe God's Law, which both in the

90 *True Wisdom.*

Scriptures, and by the Mouth of all the Doctors of the Church, declares most expressly the Obligation we lie under to shun the more immediate Cause of Falling; say rather, that you care not for Heaven, nor what becomes of your Soul; that you had rather lose God Almighty's Friendship, than the Affection you have for such an infamous Creature, that is already but as a painted Sepulcher, and in a little while more, will be only a Heap of Rottenness and Corruption: Thus will ye say what is really true, but e'er long you will find to your Cost what an Exchange you have made.

II. *Reflection:*

What ought to accompany

Confession.

Consider, that at this Tribunal, you are to appear
Cloath'd

True Wisdom. 91

Cloath'd with Humility and Confusion. This Humility will make ye lay open your Faults sincerely, without excusing them, and without laying the Blame on others; 'twill hinder ye from changing those Confessors that reprove ye, and tell ye the dangerous Condition your Soul is in. That Patient has no great Mind to Recover who seeks for an Ignorant Physician to Cure him: What then must be thought of you, if on purpose you chuse a Dumb Kind of Director, that is like one of those Ministers whom God re-proves by the Mouth of the Prophet Jeremiah, saying, They did not discover to you your Iniquity to bring you to Repentance? Lam. 2. If this be your Conduct, tis necessary to tell ye that you have no true sorrow for your Sin, and but little Concern for your Soul.

E 2 III. Re-

III. Reflection.

What ought to follow Confession.

CONSIDER what remains for you to do after Confession; towards God, towards your Neighbour, and towards your Self.

As to God, you ought to render him most humble Thanks for having been pleased to restore you to his Favour, and for reverting that Sentence of Eternal Death, that wou'd otherwise have stood good against you for your Sins. Then are you to make new Prorestitutions of Fealty to him, as to your Sovereign Lord, imploring his Assistance in fortifying your Weakness against all further Assaults of Temptations.

As to your Neighbour, you must consider whether you are
not

not oblig'd to some Restitution, either of his Reputation, or on his Goods, which you are bound to make forthwith; for the Deferring of it without sufficient Reason, is a new Sin even in those that have really a Mind to make it.

As to your self; endeavour seriously and devoutly to perform as soon as you can the Penance enjoyn'd ye, than think of the best means to prevent your returning to Sin. These Means are of Three Sorts, *Prayer, Avoiding the Occasion of Sin, and frequenting the Sacraments*; by the due Use of which you will certainly obtain the Grace of persevering in Good.

Renew then your purposes of recommending your self at least every Morning and Evening, to God Almighty, and to the Blessed Virgin, that you may continue firm in your Resolutions, never to commit

94 *True Wisdom:*

mortal Sin again. Resolve to return no more to such a House, to be no more alone with such a Person, to break off wholly such a Friendship, Resolve to confess as soon as ever you have been tempted again to any new Sin; and to fortifie your self more and more against the Assaults of the Devil, by this Sacrament, and that of the Holy Eucharist.

But as you Love your Soul, you must Resolve to beware of making use of this Sacrament itself, to Sin with the more Liberty; as many do, who if they relapse, and find themselves under a Necessity of going to Confession; Sin on without constraint; as if it would cost no more to make but one Work on't, and so to put all on the same Reckoning.

Now what can be more injurious to God, and more Prejudicial

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More Injurious to God; be-
cause you make use of that ve-
ry Blood to multiply your Sins,
which he prepares in the Sacra-
ment to destroy them: More
Prejudicial to your self, because
thus you are neer sure to make
a good Confession: And when
you do confess as you ought,
there remains usually in the
Soul many most pernicious Effects
of the past Sin; as in a Person
recover'd from a Fever, there
remain many Relicks of the late
Malady; if nothing else remains,
the ill Habit remains, which is
one of the greatest Impediments
to your Salvation.

Do ye then understand this,
you that say, you will commit
this and t other Sin, and will af-
terwards confess it; The more
Sins you commit, the more dif-
ficult will it be to be sav'd, e-
ven tho' you shou'd make a
good

E 4

96 True Wisdom

good Confession; for on the one side, the Mind grows daily more clouded, the Will becomes more harden'd, and you render your self more and more unworthy of the Divine assistance. On the other side as you grow Weaker, the Devil grows Stronger, and that force which was sufficient against a few Sins, is not so against many.

The Prayer

O God that art the Sovereign Dispenser of Life and Death, in whose Hands is the Lot of all Creatures. I confess, that the fittest Punishment for my repeated Sins ought to be Blindness. After so many Iniquities, I deserve to remain insensible, and incapable of sufficient Sorrow for a Good Confession, and the obtaining my Pardon. But for thy own sake, O Lord, do what I cannot hope thou shouldest do, for mine: Tho' I deserve not to receive this Sacrament worthily, this Sacrament deserves at least

True Wisdom. 97

to be worthily received; if I deserve not to serve thee, thou deservest however to be serv'd; that thou didst heretofore weep with Compassion over my Misery; thou that in the Garden of Olives didst lament over my Sins with Tears of Blood, Grant me, by that Blood, true Contrition, a sincere purpose to change my Life, and a firm Resolution to shun all Occasions of Relapsing. Turn to me, and I will return to thee; Heal me, and I shall be healed; Save me and I shall be saved.

What can, O Lord, be a fitter Object of thy Mercy, than my Misery! And how can the Abyss of my Wickedness be swallow'd up but by the Abyss of thy Goodness! Full therefore of a Holy Confidence, I beg thy Grace, that after thou hast with thy Blood wash'd away all my Iniquities, I may in Paradise partake of thy Glory. Amen. Pater Noster, &c. Ave Maria, &c.

Considerations

UPON

Communion.

I. Reflection.

Before Communion.

CONSIDER in the first Place the Greatness of the Mystery you receive as often as, you approach the Holy Communion. Look through those miraculous Species, and contemplate the Majesty of that God who lies conceal'd under them, who comes down from Heaven to visit ye, and to make of your Heart a Living Tabernacle, where all the Fullness of the Divinity dwells.

Re-

True Wisdom. 99

Reflect seriously upon this new Prodigy of Love, and struck with Admiration at the Sight of these Marvels, Cry out with greater Wonder than the Mother of St. John Baptist, when she was visited by the Holy Virgin. *Whence is this, that the Mother of my Lord doth come to me?* Luk. 1. 42.

Have next a true Sense of the Obligation you lye under to dispose your self to Communicate worthily, and to prepare for your Saviour a Habitation fit for him: *For you are not now to prepare an Abode for Men, but for God himself.*

With all Care then examine the State and Disposition of your Heart, try your self, according to the Precept of St. Paul, and see, if there be nothing in your Breast that may be offensive to the Purity of the Holy of Holies, for woe be to you, if, of a Heart dedica-

100 True Wisdom.

ted to the Devil, you shall make the Temple of the Lord, and so join Holiness and Sin together.

If you find your Conscience defil'd with any Mortal Crime, Approach not this Dreadful Mystery, till you have first purify'd it, in the Tribunal of Penance; there it is the Apostle will by all means have ye *examine your self*, before you partake of the *Eucharist*.

But to comprehend yet further, to what Purity of Mind so Holyan Action engages, consider in the second Place, that Jesus Christ, as if he were not satisfied with bare visiting you in the Communion, will after the strictest manner even be united to, and as it were incorporated with you, by giving you his Flesh to eat, and his Blood to drink; for the Effect of this Divine Sacrament, to transform, in a manner

True Wisdom. 101

ner, those that receive it into Jesus Christ himself, and to make them the same with him. *He that eats my Flesh and drinks my Blood, says our Saviour, dwells in me, and I in him, John 6.*

Take great heed therefore, that there may be nothing in you unworthy of Jesus, but above all have the greatest Abhorrence of Sins of Impurity, because in dishonouring your own Body, you dishonour the Body of Christ. St. Ambrose and St. Augustin seem amazed that the Son of God did not abhor even the Virgin's Womb ; what then would they think of an unclean Sinner, that wallowing in his Wickedness, dares come to the Communion, which is nothing else, according to the Holy Father, but an Extension of the Incarnation ?

II. Reflection.

At Communion.

Consider, that tho' this first Disposition, that consists in purifying ones Soul from all Sin, be sufficient to receive the Body of Jesus not unworthily, yet if you will partake of that Abundance of Grace that is annex'd to a fervent Communion, you must endeavour to prepare your self more particularly by a sensible and actual Devotion.

To make the Practice thereof the more easy, I reduce all the Affections of the Mind to three sorts of Acts, by the means of which one may raise ones self to this Actual Devotion during the Time of Communion.

Enter forthwith into a Sense of most profound Humility, by a lively Faith represent to your self the Infinite Majesty
of

True Wisdom. 103

of God really present in the Eucharist, before whom the Blessed Spirits tremble with Awe and Respect, then look back upon your self, and there behold your own Misery and Lowliness, and confounded with the Honour Jesus does ye, say from the bottom of your Heart with the Centurion in the Gospel, *Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my Roof. Lord, I am not worthy to receive thee; but I come to thee, that thou mayst make me worthy; Lord, I am weak and infirm, but I come to thee, to be strengthened and cur'd have Mercy then on me a miserable Creature, say unto my Lord, That thou art her Salvation, Soul, that alone will be sufficient to heal her.*

You must then excite your self to Acts of Love and Confidence; and to make them the more lively and tender, consider

der the Obligations you have to love Jesus, who in the Sacrament of the Eucharist gives such sensible Marks of his Love to you. Cou'd he extend his Kindness farther then by preparing this Sacred Banquet, where he himself becomes your Nourishment, where the Remembrance of the Death he has endur'd for us is renewed, where our Souls is fill'd with Grace, and where we receive a Pledge of the Glory to come.

What then ! shall we not love him, that has so much lov'd us ? Shall we not confide in him, that by giving himself, gives us all things ? Imagine that our Saviour, at the instant of your communicating, shou'd ask you as he did St. Peter, *Lovest thou me ?* Sure you ought to answer with the same Apostle *Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee,* and if I have not hitherto

True Wisdom. 105

therto lov'd thee as I ought, I
will not henceforth Live, but for
the Love of thee.

Have, in fine, a Longing De-
fire to receive *Jesus* in the Com-
munion ; for this Bread of An-
gels, says *St. Augustin*, requires to
be eaten with a great Appetite ;
and as one of the best Dispositions
to thrive with ones Meat, is to
eat it with a good Stomach, so
this Heavenly Food, will bring
forth marvellous Effects in your
Soul, if you receive it heartily,
and with a holy Impatience to
unite your self to your Saviour.
Show him then your great Desire
and Forwardness by these Words
of the Royal Prophet that suit
so well with a good Christian at
the time of his approaching the
Communion, *As the Heart pants*
after the Fountains of Waters, so my
Soul pants after thee, O God. And
tasting before-hand the Happi-

ness

Good

106 True Wisdom.

ness and Benefit you will have in possessing Jesus transported with the Spouse in the Canticles, say also I have found him whom my Soul loveth, I hold him, and will not let him go, Cant. 3.

With these Dispositions are you to come to the Holy Table, if you desire to partake of that Abundance of Grace, God never fails to shower down on those who Communicate with Truth, Fervor and Devotion.

III. Reflection

After Communion.

Consider Jesus in the midst of your Heart, Offer him your profound Respects and Worship, Thank him with an humble Acknowledgment for the inestimable Benefit of Receiving him in the Communion, and Remember ye have within you, the exhaustible Fountain of all Good,

Make

True Wisdom. 107

Make right Use then of so favourable a Minute, and since Jesus is not come into your Heart with this Fulness of Grace, but to bestow it plentifully, with Confidence lay open to him, all your Necessities; shew him all your Weaknesses, and be not ashamed to discover all your Infirmities. You cannot have a more seasonable Time to treat with God, lose not therefore the least Moment of it.

If any disorderly Passion has seized upon your Heart, beseech him to beat out so dangerous an Enemy. If the Violence of Custom, or ill Example, or human Respects, have hitherto hinder'd ye from overcoming it, beseech him most earnestly to fortify ye with his Victorious Graces, by Virtue of which the greatest Difficulties vanish. If through your own Negligence and Remissness

108 True Wisdom.

misfess you have lost the Spirit of Fervour, and the Relish of the Things of God, Entreat him earnestly to rekindle in you the Flame of his Love, which giving you an Aversion for all other things, may make you find no delight henceforth but in an inviolable Attachment to his Service.

Whatever Wants you may have, struggle with the Lord Jesus, and use with him an agreeable and holy Violence to supply them, after the Example of *Jacob*, who said to the Angel, *No I will not, O Lord, leave thee, till thou hast given me thy Blessing, Gen. 32. I will not, O Lord, let thee go till I have obtain'd of thee, the Grace that is necessary to overcome my Passions, to keep thy Law, to serve thee as thou deservest, and to live and die in thy Favour.*

Endeavour

True Wisdom. 109

Endeavour then to be fully convinced of this Truth, that the greatest Unhappiness can befall ye, is to prove ungrateful to your Benefactor, and to force him by your Unfaithfulness to leave ye.

What Cause of Confusion wou'd it be to ye, if Jesus, after having sanctified your Soul, by his real Presence, after having nourish'd ye with his Body and Blood, shou'd have just Reason to complain, that he had so plentifully bestow'd his Benefits on an Unthankful Person? It may be, he has but too often had Reason to make this Complaint against ye, for how many times have you shamefully turn'd him out of your Heart, to make Place for his most mortal Enemy, the Devil? Beware of putting hereafter so great an Affront upon your God; look well before ye, so as to avoid
for

110 True Wisdom.

for the future, what may be an occasion of your Relapse.

Suffer nothing in you that may divide your Heart between Jesus and the Creature; and whilst he is within you, make him a sincere and solemn Promise, that nothing in the World shall be able to separate you from his Love.

The Prayer.

In thy Presence thou beholdest, O Lord, a miserable Sinner: whom the Hand of thy Justice has so often spared instead of dealing with me, as thou hast with so many others who are now in Hell bewailing the Abuse of the Adorable Sacrament of thy Body; thou dost yet in despite of all my Ingratitude come to visit me, and returnest into a Heart from whence I have so often excluded thee, to make Place for thy Enemy. Nay, am I not yet so unhappy as to have still some secret Sin in me that may render me unworthy of thy Bounty?

Am

True Wisdom. 111

Am not yet a Judas by giving thee to Day the Kiss of Peace, to betray thee again to Morrow? Am I not still of the Number of those that receive thee in the Communion only to Crucify thee anew? Suffer it not O Lord, to be so; if I have been an unfaithful, a perjurd, and treacherous Soulsmitherto, pierce d now with the sharpest Sorrow, I fall prostrate at thy Feet to beg thy Pardon, and do Swear to thee from this Day forward an inviolable Fealty.

By the Motive alone of thy Love, I hate and detest whatever there is in me that has displeas'd thee; I desire that all the Powers of my Body and Soul, which have served hitherto only to offend thee, may not be employed hereafter but in making known thy Goodness. These Eyes, that are the Witnesses of the Marvels in this August Sacrament, these Eyes guilty of so many sinful Glances, shall serve henceforward to deplore my Unfaithfulness.

This

112 True Wisdom:

This Tongue which thou art going to sanctify by the touch of thy Holy Body, shall be no more the Instrument of Calumny and Detraction; and this Heart which is to be thy Temple and Tabernacle shall be no more spotted with those wicked Desires, that have so often caused thee to withdraw thy self from me.

Come then, O Lord, make no more Delay; come and take Possession of a Soul, that desires to live no longer than for thee; come and confirm all the Promises I have made thee, and let this Divine Sacrament, which I am about to Receive, be the Seal of them, never more to be broken by me. This Grace I beg of thee, O my God; so that having had the Happiness of possessing thee even in this Life, I may enjoy thee eternally in the next. Amen. Pater Noster, &c. Ave Maria, &c.

T H E E N D .



4411 add 10.